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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
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02/13/2006

Jurgen Damm

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03/18/2009

CNH AMERICA LLC

INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY LAW DEPARTMENT

PO BOX 1895, M.S. 641

NEW HOLLAND, PA 17557

EXAMINER

MITCHELL, JOEL F

ART UNIT

PAPER NUMBER

3671

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**Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.**

The time period for reply, if any, is set in the attached communication.

<b>Office Action Summary</b>	<b>Application No.</b> 10/539,895	<b>Applicant(s)</b> DAMM ET AL.	
	<b>Examiner</b> Joel F. Mitchell	<b>Art Unit</b> 3671	

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

### Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

### Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 08 December 2008.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**.                      2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

### Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-14 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) 6 and 7 is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-5 and 8-14 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

### Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on \_\_\_\_\_ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.  
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).  
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

### Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All    b) ☐ Some \*    c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. \_\_\_\_\_.
3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

\* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

### Attachment(s)

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| 1) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)          | 4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413)           |
| 2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) | Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____                                      |
| 3) <input type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO/SB/08)          | 5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application |
| Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____  | 6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____                          |

## DETAILED ACTION

### ***Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103***

1. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

**2. Claims 1-5 and 14 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Wykhuis et al. (US 4,580,811) in view of Schultz (US 4,664,404).**

3. With respect to claim 1, Wykhuis discloses a vehicle (10) having a rear frame including left (14) and right (12) longitudinal beams, each having a rear end, and providing for the components or subassemblies of a rear counterweight, lights and a bumper, the improvement comprising:

the bumper and the rear counterweight are comprised of a generally flat elongate rear end plate (30) having opposing outer end regions and extending across the entire width of the grader (Fig. 1);

the rear end plate capable of a greater wall thickness (addition of weights 52 and removal of spacers 48 leading to a greater wall thickness);

the rear end plate viewed in the direction of travel of the grader constitutes the rearmost part of the rear frame (seen in Fig. 2); and

tail lights are built into openings (col. 1, lines 65-68) in the rear end plate positioned in the outer end regions (Fig. 1).

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4. Wykhuis does not explicitly disclose a road grader. Wykhuis discloses a rear counterweight assembly for a vehicle. This vehicle frame appears similar to that of road graders and is capable of being a road grader. It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to use the assembly of Wykhuis on a road grader. The motivation being "to provide a counterweight assembly which does not hinder the function of the vehicle nor disturb the styling lines thereof." (col. 1, lines 26-28)

5. Wykhuis does not explicitly disclose differing wall thicknesses corresponding to the presence of rear-mounted equipment. Schultz discloses that rear axles can become overloaded when the rear portion supports a hitch assembly, an implement, and when rear ballast is provided (col. 1, lines 26-30). Therefore, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to provide a lighter configuration of Wykhuis, and hence a thinner one, when using the counterweight with rear-mounted equipment in order to prevent overloading. Wykhuis and Schultz are analogous because they both disclose rear counterweights for vehicles.

6. With respect to claim 2, Wykhuis discloses the assembly regarding claim 1, above. The Examiner takes official notice that it is old and well known in the art to form objects, which were previously of more than one piece, as only a single piece. It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to form the rear end plate (30) as one piece in order to eliminate the need for assembly.

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7. With respect to claims 3 and 5, Wykhuis discloses the assembly wherein the rear ends of the left longitudinal beam (14) and the right longitudinal beam (12) are joined to a rear transverse beam (16).

8. With respect to claim 4, Wykhuis discloses the assembly wherein the rear end plate (30) is removably attached (via 38, 42, 46, 50; shown exploded and detached in Fig. 1) to the rear transverse beam (16).

9. With respect to claim 14, it would be inherent to provide and use rear end plate as disclosed by Wykhuis and Schultz, above, with regard to claims 1-5.

**10. Claims 8-10 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Luttrell (US 3,853,231) in view of Schultz.**

11. With respect to claim 8, Luttrell discloses a road grader (10) comprising:

a wheel-supported main frame (16) having a front end and an opposing rear end (18) as determined by the normal direction of travel, the main frame comprised of joined front and rear frames (shown as articulated in Fig. 1);

an engine (14) and a driver's cab (seen in Fig. 1) supported on said main frame;

a vertically adjustable ground-engaging blade (at 12) supported by said main frame;

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the rear frame (18) having left (20) and right (22) longitudinal beams generally parallel and in the general same horizontal plane (seen in Fig. 2), each with a rear end;

a generally flat elongate rear end plate (48) jointed (via 24) to the rear end of each of the right and left longitudinal beams;

the rear end plate constituting the rearmost part of the rear frame (seen in Fig. 1) and extending generally the width of the road grader (seen in Fig. 2); and

the rear end plate having openings (apertures of col. 3, lines 59-61) therethrough to accommodate the attachment of rear-mounted equipment.

12. Luttrell does not explicitly disclose recesses to allow rear-mounted equipment to pass from a position below the plate through a lower portion of the rear end plate.

Schultz discloses rear end plates (51) having recesses (53) along a bottom edge to avoid interference with a control cylinder (52) associated with an implement attached to the rear. Luttrell and Schultz are analogous because they both disclose rear counterweights for vehicles. It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to provide the grader of Luttrell with the openings as taught by Schultz in order to accommodate control cylinders of rear implements.

13. With respect to claim 9, Luttrell discloses the road grader above. The Examiner takes official notice that it is old and well known in the art to form objects, which were previously of more than one piece, as only a single piece. It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to form the rear end plate (48) as one piece in order to eliminate the need for assembly.

14. With respect to claim 10, Luttrell discloses the road grader wherein the rear ends of the left longitudinal beam (20) and the right longitudinal beam (22) are joined to a rear transverse beam (24).

**15. Claims 11 and 13 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Luttrell in view of Schultz as applied to claim 8 above, and further in view of Wykhuis.**

16. With respect to claim 11, Luttrell and Schultz do not disclose openings for lights in the rear plate. Wykhuis discloses a rear counterweight assembly wherein the rear end plate has opposing outer end portions and openings through the outer end portions and taillights are fitted therein (col. 1, lines 65-68).

17. Wykhuis does not explicitly disclose backup/brake and flasher lights. Wykhuis discloses the assembly housing "a pair of taillights having lenses 32." (col. 1, line 66) The Examiner takes official notice that backup/brake and flasher lights being built into a bumper assembly is well known in the vehicle art. It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to provide the assembly of Wykhuis with backup/brake and flasher lights in order to signal braking and turning.

18. Luttrell, Schultz, and Wykhuis are analogous because they all disclose rear counterweight assemblies for vehicles. It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to provide the road grader of Luttrell and

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Schultz with the rear lighting capabilities as taught by Wykhuis in order to signal braking and turning, as well as to provide a convenient location for electrical connections to rear-mounted equipment.

19. With respect to claim 13, Luttrell does not explicitly disclose differing wall thicknesses corresponding to the presence of rear-mounted equipment. Wykhuis discloses increasing the wall thickness through the addition of weights (52). Schultz discloses that rear axles can become overloaded when the rear portion supports a hitch assembly, an implement, and when rear ballast is provided (col. 1, lines 26-30). Therefore, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to provide a lighter configuration of the rear end plate, and hence a thinner one, when using the counterweight with rear-mounted equipment in order to prevent overloading.

**20. Claim 12 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Luttrell in view of Schultz in view of Wykhuis as applied to claim 11 above, and further in view of Latterman (US 3,490,787).**

21. Luttrell, Schultz, and Wykhuis disclose the road grader with regard to claims 8 and 11. They do not explicitly disclose the rear end plate being made of steel. Latterman discloses a tractor bumper and counterweight assembly wherein the end



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plate (7, as well as associated members 2 and 11) are made of heavy steel (col. 2, lines 18-24).

22. Luttrell, Schultz, Wykhuis, and Latterman are analogous because they all disclose counterweight assemblies for vehicles. It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to provide the road grader disclosed by Luttrell, Schultz, and Wykhuis with a steel rear end plate as taught by Latterman. The motivation being to have the plate withstand normal wear as well as wear encountered in using the plate as a bumper for pushing other vehicles or implements (Latterman, col. 2, lines 18-22).

### ***Response to Arguments***

23. Applicant's arguments with respect to claims 1, 2, 8, and 13 have been considered but are moot in view of the new ground(s) of rejection.

### ***Conclusion***

24. Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Joel F. Mitchell whose telephone number is (571)272-7689. The examiner can normally be reached on Mon-Fri 8:30-5:00.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Thomas B. Will can be reached on (571) 272-6998. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

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Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.

/Thomas B Will/  
Supervisory Patent Examiner  
Art Unit 3671

JFM  
3/16/9